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LETTER DATED 18 NOVEMBER 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have been instructed by my Government to forward the attached letter from His Excellency Mr. Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, addressed to Your Excellency which I received today.

I would kindly request Your Excellency to circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hagos GHEBREHIWET
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

Annex

Letter dated 18 November 1993 from the President of Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council

At this critical juncture in the international intervention in Somalia, allow me, Your Excellency, to present to the members of the Security Council the views and concerns of my Government.

1. The State of Eritrea was one of the first countries to call for and strongly support the international intervention in Somalia. Within our modest means, we have worked actively and constructively for the success of the initial objectives of the intervention.

2. The international intervention in Somalia enjoyed not only the solid support of the international community but it was also warmly welcomed by the Somali people. The various political forces too were ready to cooperate. In light of what followed later, we cannot help but remember that it was this auspicious beginning that encouraged the international community to decide on the intervention in the first place. Indeed if the objectives of the intervention were pursued with a clear sense of direction and firmness, much would have been achieved and we would now have been considering the termination of a highly successful mission.

3. Unfortunately, the intervention lacked direction, mistakes were made one after the other, early and repeated calls for correction of these mistakes were ignored, and finally the whole intervention was derailed. Instead of helping the Somalis to resolve their differences, UNOSOM sought to supplant them and decide on their behalf political arrangements and structures. It became a party to the conflict. Unnecessarily, many lives, huge resources, and the initial confidence, consensus, credibility and good-will were lost.

4. The situation in Somalia remains extremely precarious and explosive. Some problems such as disarmament and political reconciliation have become more, instead of less, complicated. There is also no denying that international confidence and support have weakened and cannot be expected to be sustained for long. If the international community is to avert a disaster in Somalia, it must face up to these realities and revise accordingly the United Nations mandate on Somalia. The time, we believe, is too short for half measures.

5. Specifically, we believe, the following should be essential elements of the revised United Nations mandate:

- Political: Any political intervention should be limited to helping and creating conducive conditions for Somalis to resolve their problems and hammer out and implement agreements for national reconciliation. Unwarranted interference in the internal political dynamics of Somalia has proved counter-productive and must be ruled out.

- Security: Many opportunities for disarmament were lost and the international community cannot now meaningfully tackle the issue. Disarmament should, therefore, only be envisaged in conjunction with the political process.

- Rehabilitation and reconstruction: The international community must focus on and strengthen its rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, not only because this is essential to put Somalia back on its feet, but because it is very important for the success of the political and security processes.

- Time-frame: In light of realities in Somalia, the mood among countries contributing troops and the harms and dangers of a drawn out but ineffective intervention, there needs to be a reasonable deadline - no later than mid-1994 - for the end of the UNOSOM mandate.

(Signed) Isaias AFWERKI
President
